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Sixty Million Acres: American Veterans and the Public Lands Before the Civil War

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primarily agricultural, too many of their hastily assembled members came from other occupations and knew nothing of farming. By the time the eastern leaders of Associationism were ready to begin, followers around the country had already tried the Fourier experiment and failed at it. Associationism, if it were to work, required careful planning. But the society of Jacksonian America, amorphous to the point of anarchy, was not amenable to careful planning. Although Guarneri himself does not make the point this way, his story shows the failure of grass-roots enthusiasm as a substitute for organization and capital.

Eventually Fourierism became caught up in the spiraling vortex of the debate over slavery. Originally, its advocates had tried to sidestep the issue, claiming that their doctrine showed the way to avoid both the coercion of slavery and the competition of the free market in the practice of cooperative socialism. But this proved an untenable position. Despite the affinities between Associationism and the social philosophy of certain southerners such as George Fitzhugh, the humanitarianism of most Fourierists dictated an antislavery stance. The critique of slavery, however, became bound up with a celebration of northern free enterprise capitalism that undermined the appeal of utopian socialism.

This book is beautifully written, carefully thought out, and massively researched. It combines social relevance and moral commitment with broad learning, scholarly integrity, and sound judgment. While sympathetic to the Associationists' critique of the injustices of modern civilization, Guarneri also shrewdly points out their contradictions, shortcomings, and disappointments. Though he demonstrates empathy for ideologues, Guarneri never becomes doctrinaire himself. And in the course of explaining the rise and fall of Fourierism, he has given us a panoramic portrait of America in the middle period. With this book, Carl Guarneri takes his place as one of the leading American historians of his generation.

Sixty Million Acres: American Veterans and the Public Lands before the Civil War, by James W. Oberly. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1990. xii, 222 pp. Illustrations, maps, tables, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$28.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY KENNETH J. WINKLE, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Historians have long debated the equity of federal public land policy during the nineteenth century and have puzzled over the dramatic mid-century transformation of party positions on the land issue.

Originally, Democrats favored lower prices, preemption, and homesteading to speed settlement of public lands, while Whigs proposed selling large parcels at higher prices to generate revenue. Beginning in the 1850s, however, Republicans championed federal land giveaways, while Democrats opposed free homesteads and railroad land grants.

James W. Oberly joins this debate by examining the little-studied federal land bounties of the Mexican War era. Oberly argues that the four land bounties awarded to five hundred thousand veterans and their families between 1847 and 1855 contributed substantially to the "basic change in federal land policy from cash sales to free land" (5-6). In 1847 Congress granted 160 acres to Mexican War regulars and volunteers who served for twelve months or the duration. In 1850, Congress granted 40 to 160 acres to veterans of the War of 1812 and various Indian campaigns; two years later it made these land warrants assignable for cash. In 1855 the Old Soldiers Bill granted any veteran who served for two weeks in any war an immediately assignable land warrant for 160 acres.

Oberly analyzed some 2,700 of these warrantees, a 0.5 percent sample, and provides a detailed administrative history of the bounty warrants. He concludes that bounty warrants were a fair and efficient method for disposing of public lands. Most of the land warrants were sold for cash and represented a pension for older veterans in eastern states rather than encouraging them to move west. The resulting private market in warrants lowered the price of land for all settlers, stimulated perhaps one-half of the growth in the nation's farmland during the 1850s, disposed of 4 percent of the western public domain, and still did not profit speculators unduly, boosting land speculation by no more than 12 percent. Veterans benefited from the private market in warrants, following the market shrewdly and receiving 80 percent of face value for their warrants. The land bounties succeeded as a veterans' pension program and were an important component of the shift from a land policy of revenue to one of broader social and economic goals. Congress quickly addressed their chief flaw, their failure to encourage veterans to move west, by making the warrants assignable for cash.

Oberly's roll-call analysis of the four bounty bills in Congress enables him to assess the partisan and sectional implications of the sixty-million-acre giveaway. Politically, the bounties were not very controversial. Land sales generated little revenue by 1846, revolutionary war veterans had received a pension-grant in 1832, Congress was already giving away land for other purposes, and a strong veterans' lobby quickly developed. An East-West split that pitted veterans in eastern states against settlers in western states proved more decisive

than growing North-South tensions or Whig-Democratic divisions. Eastern congressmen, northern and southern, supported bounties; westerners opposed them, holding out for homesteads. Ironically, many veterans opposed homesteads because of their impact on the cash value of land warrants. Overall, broad changes in federal land policy rather than the lure of speculation moved the land bounties through Congress.

Sixty Million Acres is particularly important for Iowa history. Coinciding with the wheat boom of the 1850s, one-fourth of all bounty warrants were located in Iowa, encompassing almost twice as much land—fourteen million acres—as in the nearest competitor, Wisconsin. During the peak year, 1856, warrant holders located three million Iowa acres. Oberly charts the movement of warrant redemptions across the state's eleven federal land offices, from Dubuque and Iowa City in the east, through Des Moines, and to Council Bluffs and Sioux City in the west.

This detailed look at the land bounties—their origins in Congress and their administration—examines new sources, sheds light on older interpretations, and tells an interesting story. The book unfortunately slights ideological considerations and therefore says little about the partisan transformation of the land question before the Civil War. Oberly wisely disclaims the primacy of the veterans' bounties in provoking the "sea change in party positions" (2) but then neglects this important ideological transformation that involved both free soil before the Civil War and Republican political economy for the rest of the century. Slighting party positions, Oberly also interprets the shift from cash sales to free land as national policy rather than Whig and Republican policy: Democrats simultaneously retreated into opposition to free land. While too narrowly focused in this respect, *Sixty Million Acres* is a finely crafted and crisply written account of the veterans' land bounties.

Whitestone Hill: The Indians and the Battle, by Clair Jacobson. LaCrosse: Pine Tree Publishing, 1991. 120 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes. \$8.00 paper.

REVIEWED BY HERBER T. HOOVER, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

The focus intended in this volume is a summertime expedition led by General Alfred Sully during the Minnesota Sioux War. Mislabeling the conflict the "Minnesota Sioux Uprising," the author reviews some contents in Sioux treaties and describes military reactions by non-Indian forces under the commands of Henry Hastings Sibley and

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